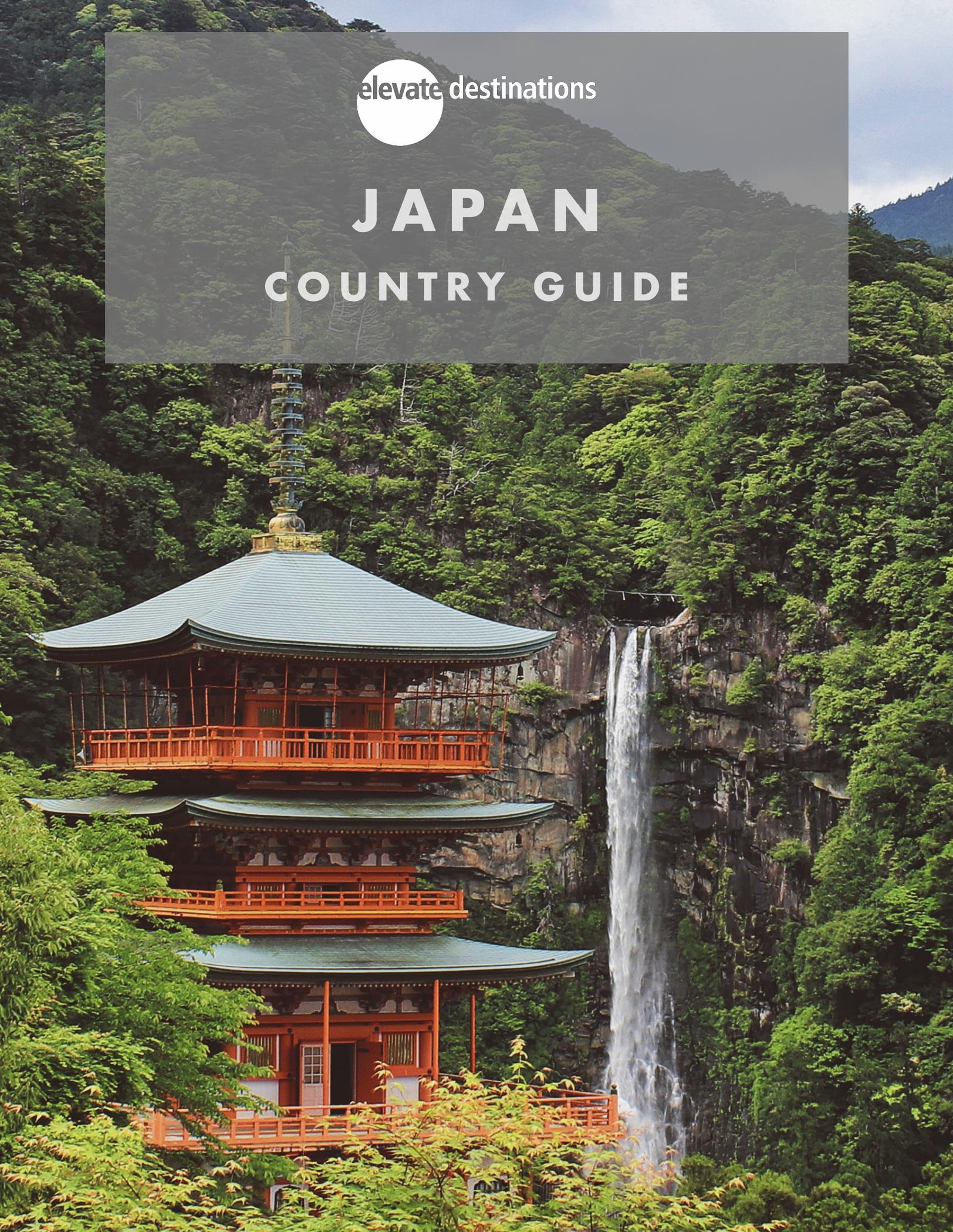


elevate™ destinations

# JAPAN

## COUNTRY GUIDE



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# PURPOSE OF THE COUNTRY GUIDE

Welcome to the beautiful country of Japan! In this document you will find a plethora of information that will be useful during your journey. The information listed in this Country Guide includes cultural guidelines, communication tips and tricks, health and safety recommendations, and so much more! Please note that all information specific to your trip, such as inclusions and exclusions, staff contact numbers, flight recommendations, etc. is listed in your Online Trip Portal. For any questions unanswered by either the country guide or the online portal, please don't hesitate to reach out to an Elevate Destinations' staff member. We hope that this document proves to be helpful and that you are getting excited for your journey to Japan!

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

### Passport

Travelers to Japan should ensure that the validity of their passports extends 6 months beyond the end of their intended stay, and should have at least 2 blank (unstamped) visa pages in their passport to enter the country. The last 2 amendment pages are unacceptable for visas and immigration stamps. Note that you will need to renew your passport if you are out of Visa pages, as the State Department no longer provides additional pages. If you need to renew your passport, please do so as soon as possible. We also recommend travelers scan a copy of your passport and email it to yourself. This way you always have a copy if something happens to it while traveling.

If you'd like assistance renewing your passport, we recommend [A1 Passport and Visa Services](#) in Washington D.C. for their excellent customer service. To do so, please email them at [info@a1passportvisa.com](mailto:info@a1passportvisa.com) and let them know you are working with Elevate Destinations on your travel arrangements.

### Visa

Travelers with a United States passport do not need a visa to visit Japan for Tourism under 90 days. For a full list of visa exempt countries, click [here](#).

### Travel Insurance

Elevate Destinations requires travel and medical insurance that covers Covid-related medical expenses and costs associated with quarantine. Proof of your travel and medical insurance is required to participate in this program.

We highly recommend travelers purchase "cancel for any reason" coverage which provides more robust coverage for cancellation. To be eligible for CFAR coverage, travelers must purchase it within 1 to 21 days of their first trip payment. Every policy has different requirements for this so please verify with a specific provider.

Below are two insurance brokers that Elevate Destinations recommends:

- Yonder Travel Insurance  
**Email:** [hello@insureyonder.com](mailto:hello@insureyonder.com)  
**Phone Number:** 855-358-6433 (M-F 8:30-5:00 CT)
- Travel Insurance Center (Dan Drennan)  
**Email:** [dan@travelinsurancecenter.com](mailto:dan@travelinsurancecenter.com)  
**Phone Number:** 1-866-979-6753 (extension 3621)

Guests may acquire travel insurance through Yonder Travel Insurance, Travel Insurance Center, or any other travel insurance company of their choosing. Elevate Destinations recommends that travelers evaluate the insurance options available for their needs, and inquire with providers about insurance that will cover them for all Covid-related expenses including quarantine costs while abroad.

## **Covid Protocols**

**Covid Vaccination:** Elevate Destinations requires that all travelers are fully vaccinated and up to date on any doses of the the Covid-19 vaccine they are eligible for. This means many travelers will need a booster. You will need to submit a copy of your vaccination card to Elevate Destinations prior to departure.

**Entry Requirements and Updates:** As Covid is continually evolving, please check your Online Trip Portal for the most up to date information regarding entry requirements and health and safety precautions.

## **Immunizations**

Prior to travel, Elevate Destinations strongly recommends that you look into recommended immunizations for your time in Japan. Given that we are not a licensed Health Care provider, we cannot advise travelers on which immunizations they may need. We recommend that all travelers do the following:

- a) Consult with a travel clinic or your personal physician regarding immunizations and other precautions you may need to take in order to participate in this journey. You will need to do this well in advance of your trip as some vaccinations require time to take effect, and you may need to allow time between a series of shots.
- b) Visit [the CDC Website for Japan](#) to view recommended vaccines and medicines, travel health notices for the region, and other tips for staying healthy and safe.

## Other Health Considerations

This will be an amazing journey, but as with all travel, a spirit of adventure and a degree of flexibility will enhance your enjoyment of this program. This will be a moderately active program, with considerable walking on narrow, cobblestone roads and a number of travel days with early departures and activities scheduled throughout the day.

Travel in Japan can be physically demanding. You must be able to enter and exit a wide variety of vehicles including trains and vans. Dust and other air impurities may be present in heavy concentrations, and colds, nasal congestion and sore throat may occur. Japan is a small country although air or train travel is often scheduled to reduce travel times between longer distances, some extended road journeys are often required.

We recommend a medium level of physical fitness, as some of the drives may be long, with sections of bumpy roads. For the most satisfying experience, and in fairness to your fellow travelers, please note that this trip requires the following:

- Ability to walk at least one mile without difficulty
- Ability to spend extended periods of time on your feet
- Ability to climb sets of stairs without assistance
- Ability to keep pace with an active group of travelers and to be on time for all scheduled activities
- Ability to ride comfortably in a vehicle for extended periods of time

## Safety Recommendations

Japan is a very safe country, however you should always keep in mind these basic ground rules for travel safety:

- Keep all valuables in the hotel safe or in a locked suitcase.
- Avoid flashing money. Be mindful of your belongings at all time. Keep bags in front of you in crowds, and on your lap when at restaurants.
- Pay attention: avoid walking around with your smartphone in hand.
- Be vigilant when crossing roads.
- Stick with the group.
- Always make sure that others know of your whereabouts and movements.
- Avoid street protests or large gatherings.
- Do not wear expensive or sentimentally valuable jewelry while traveling.
- Let your guide know if you have any safety concerns.

# Communications

The country code for Japan is +81. To call numbers in Japan from the U.S. dial 011 + 81 + area code + eight-digit local number

**Wifi:** In most places you will visit in Japan, wifi will be available and reliable. However, speed, bandwidth, and availability may fluctuate. Most convenience stores also have free wifi hotspots if needed.

**International Calls:** If you are in Japan and trying to reach a number in the US, dial 00 before dialing the country code and local number.

**Staying connected:** Here are the most common methods for making local/international calls:

1. **Smart Phone apps:** Apps such as WhatsApp and Viber (when Wifi is available).
2. **Getting an international calling package:** Setting up international coverage from your cell phone provider for the duration of your trip is often the simplest option and the best to avoid roaming charges.
3. **Use a local phone / SIM card:** SIM cards are available for international travelers for making calls within Japan as international calls can get expensive. Please be aware of any requirements your phone has in order to accept the local SIM cards (i.e. size of SIM card, jailbroken, etc). Please let your guide know if you would like assistance purchasing a local SIM. To purchase a local SIM card, you will need to provide a copy of your passport.
  1. **Please note:** If your phone allows Wifi calling, you can also obtain a portable wifi device over a local SIM card which are more cost effective.

## Smart Traveler Tip!

We recommend that all travelers from the U.S. sign-up for the [State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)! This is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in case of an emergency. Enrolling in this program has enormous benefits

in case of an emergency while abroad:

- You will receive information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination
- Enrolling lets the U.S. Embassy in that country know that you are there and helps them contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family-related.

# Essential Travel Documents

In case of emergency, it is advisable to make photocopies of your important documents and leave a few copies in your luggage, your money belt, and with relatives or friends at home. Also email a scanned copy to yourself or take a screenshot or photo of the document and save it in an "Important Travel Documents" folder in your photo app on your phone.

*These are the documents you should have printed and with you during your travel:*

- A photo copy of your passport
- Covid-19 Vaccination Card
- International flight itinerary or e-tickets
- QR code generated from the [Visit Japan Web Application](#)
- [Quarantine Questionnaire Form](#)
- Travel and medical insurance policy details and 24-hour emergency number
- Details of relatives/friends and your primary care physician to be contacted in an emergency
- Bank and credit card details, camera serial numbers etc.

## Money

The local currency in Japan is the Japanese Yen (JPY, ¥). The Japanese Yen comes in the following denominations:

**Banknotes:** JP¥ 1,000, JP¥ 2,000, JP¥ 5,000, JP¥ 10,000

**Coins:** JP¥ 1, JP¥ 5, JP¥ 10, JP¥ 50, JP¥ 100, JP¥ 500

You will notice that the yen sign (¥) that is familiar within the west is rarely used in Japan. Instead you will often see the kanji character 円.

### Smart Traveler Tip!

Be sure to notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel plans, in case they view your activity as fraudulent and put a block on your card.

**For your extra personal costs and shopping, bringing USD \$30-\$50 per day is a good rule of thumb.**

Local currency can be obtained at authorized facilities (such as ATMS, post-offices, hotels and banks). It is recommend to obtain money from an international ATM at the airport upon arrival, taking out around ¥50,000. **Please note:** Banks are not open on weekends and some are unable to change money after 2pm. Be sure to plan accordingly.

**Cash & Exchanging Money:** Local currency is used in most places, especially smaller stores and markets. Ask for smaller bills when getting cash or change as some smaller vendors may not carry change for bigger bills.

If you exchange money, do so only at authorized outlets such as banks and hotels, and exchange only what you think you will spend in-country. Reconversion on departure may be difficult. Coins cannot be reconverted. Save all receipts from any currency exchange transaction. You may be asked to produce them when you exit the country, and they are required if you intend to reconvert local currency. To see what the current exchange rate is, check online at <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>.

\*Note: You will need your passport to exchange money at a bank or Bureau.

We recommend bringing \$200 - \$300 in USD cash in case of emergency and for personal spending. If you bring USD, your bills should be:

- **New** (printed in the last 5 years)
- **In pristine condition** (no rips, tears, smudges, markings, creases, etc)

**Credit Cards:** Credit cards (mainly Visa and MasterCard) are accepted in larger establishments and hotels. Cash is more appropriate everywhere else. Most merchants will typically charge an additional fee for a credit card transaction.

**ATM/Debit Cards:** You can use your debit card to withdraw money from select international ATMs in Japan. Please find a list of international ATMs that accept foreign issued Debit Cards:

- **7-Eleven Convenience Store ATMs:** Often 24 hrs
- **Family Mart Convenience Stores ATMs:** Often 24 hrs
- **Citibank ATMs:** Not usually 24 hrs
- **Post Office ATMs:** Not usually 24 hrs, closed on bank holidays and Sundays.

\*Note: ATMs in Japan require a four-digit pin not beginning in zero.

Banks, and ATMs are available in most major cities, and your guide can generally help with withdrawing cash throughout your trip. There is usually a small fee per transaction on top of what your own bank charges for withdrawing cash at an ATM.

\*Note: ATMs in remote areas can be finicky, and may not work on a given hour or day. We recommend traveling with 2 or 3 crisp \$100 bills stored safely in your carry-on luggage to be exchanged in the case that ATMs are not working for you.

## IN-COUNTRY INFO

### Time

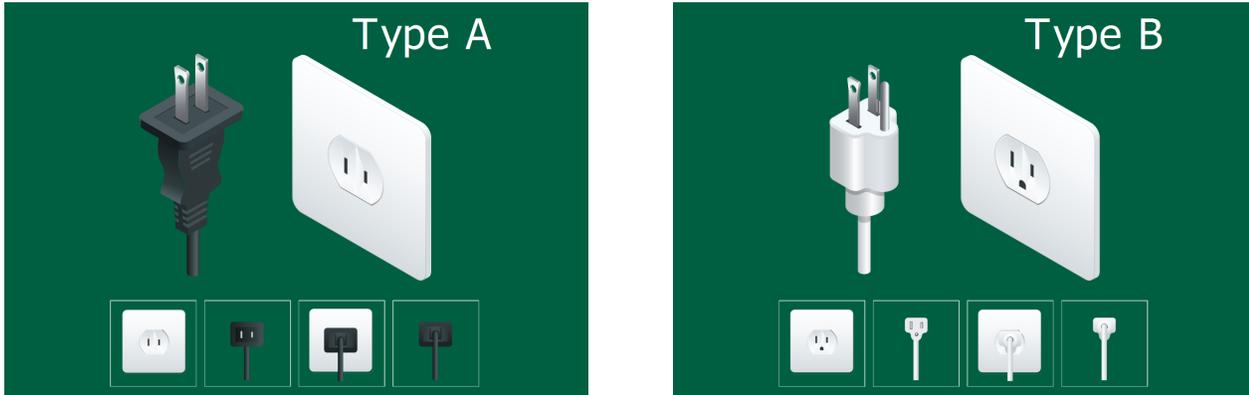
Japan follows GMT+9. Therefore, time in the locations of your visit will be 13 hours ahead of East Coast time, and 15 hours ahead of West Coast time.

#### Smart Traveler Tip!

Consider downloading a conversion app for things like currency, temperature, time, and distance while traveling. Here are some apps that we like: Units - Free Unit Converter, Convert Units for Free, Converter+, GlobeConvert

# Electricity

Japan uses a standard of 100V, 50 Hz in eastern Japan (including Tokyo, Yokohama, Tohoku) and 60Hz in western Japan (including Nagoya, Osaka, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Shikoku, Kyushu). Plug types A and B are used across the country, however Type B sockets are the minority in Japan. The following images show the type of plugs, sockets, and adapters you can use while traveling in Japan. To keep your electronics up and running, we suggest purchasing a universal plug.



\*Note: Although Japan uses the same plugs that are used in the United States, still bring a universal adapter if you plan on bringing anything with three prongs as you may not have a Type B outlet available.

# Water & Food Safety

Tap water is safe to drink in all areas of Japan. Elevate Destinations encourages travelers to pack a reusable water bottle to fill up with clean drinking water and to reduce usage of single-waste plastics. Clean drinking water and soft drinks will be supplied at all meals and water will be available in the van.

Japan is one of the world's most important food markets with **high standards** and an excellent reputation for food safety. However, we still recommend travelers eat foods that have been cooked well.

# Bathrooms

Almost all toilets in Japan are well maintained and kept spotlessly clean to ensure the utmost comfort for all travelers to Japan. On the whole, toilets are free to use and toilet paper is always provided. Toilet paper can be thrown directly into the toilet after use.

In Japan, toilets are classified into three large categories: washiki toire (traditional Japanese toilet), yoshiki toire (Western-style toilet), and a takino-toire (multifunction toilet).

Depending on the place, you may find traditional Japanese toilets in older sightseeing spots and buildings. However nowadays, many places use Western-style toilets.

Sometimes, toilets will have a small sink-like area at the top of the tank. This is recycled, clean water you can use to wash your hands with.

One thing you should definitely try out when using Japanese toilets is the washlet bidet function. Although not available with all toilets, these functions are common. They allow you to wash in warm water, and also keeps the toilet seat heated.

Some toilets may look confusing to flush as some will have a flush handle that is hidden behind the toilet while other times the flush button will be in Japanese. [This article](#) has a helpful infographic translating all the different buttons you may encounter.

## Waste Disposal

Japanese people are well disciplined in taking their litter home with them, or making sure that it finds its way to the appropriate bin or recycling box, so please do your best to do likewise! Trash cans are rare in public spaces in Japan so pack your trash and take it to the hotel with you. Vending machines will often have recycling trash cans just for cans or plastic bottles next to them and convenience stores **sometimes** have trash cans available.

Recycling is quite strict in Japan so guests can expect to separate cans, plastic bottles, glass, and paper into 4 separate categories. [This article](#) explains the different recycling rules.

To minimize your impact on the country you are visiting, please consider the following guidelines:

- Leave no trace — everything that you bring with you should go home with you.
- If you plan on shopping, make sure that you have extra room in your luggage or an extra bag to check on your way home (don't dump items to make room!)
- Avoid packing with plastic baggies and instead purchase reusable packing cubes, cloth bags, and reusable toiletry bags
- Bring a reusable water bottle that you can refill
- Remove packaging or tags of any newly purchased items before you go

## Local Cuisine & Drink

Japanese cuisine offers an abundance of gastronomical delights with a boundless variety of regional and seasonal dishes, which have developed through centuries of political, economic, and social changes. Most Japanese restaurants specialize in one particular type of food, while only some offer a variety of dishes. Each region of Japan also has its own specialty foods, unique to or particularly famous in that one area of the country.

The traditional cuisine of Japan (washoku) is based on rice with miso soup and other dishes; there is an emphasis on seasonal ingredients. Side dishes often consist of fish, pickled vegetables, and vegetables cooked in broth. Seafood is common, often grilled, but also served raw as sashimi or

in sushi. Seafood and vegetables are also deep-fried in a light batter, as tempura. Apart from rice, a staple includes noodles, such as soba and udon.

Historically influenced by Chinese cuisine, Japanese cuisine has also opened up to influence from Western cuisines in the modern era. Dishes inspired by foreign food—in particular Chinese food—like ramen and gyōza, as well as foods like spaghetti, curry and hamburgers, have been adapted to Japanese tastes and ingredients.

If you plan on eating out on your own in Japan, please note the following:

- **Dietary Restrictions:** Not all restaurants can accommodate dietary restrictions and most establishments need to be made aware of any concerns well ahead of time.
- **Reservations:** Cancelling a reservation at restaurants in Japan is not culturally acceptable. Many high-end establishments will charge a 100% cancellation fee (for the total cost of the meal if it is a course menu). Similarly, being late to a reservation is not acceptable and a lot of high-end restaurants will not seat guests that arrive even 5 minutes late.

## Weather Conditions

The weather is a favorite topic of conversation in Japan. This is unsurprising given the complexity of the climate in a country spanning 20 degrees of latitude. From the harsh winters and mild summers of Hokkaido to the sub-tropical Okinawan climate there is a great variety in Japanese weather.

On the mainland, summer temperatures are generally between 68° and 86° F. In the early part of summer (mid-June to mid-July) there is a rainy season lasting a few weeks, this is however broken up by days of fine weather. Rains come again in late summer thanks to typhoons, although these usually blow over in a day.

**Summer:** Very hot and humid

**Winter:** Cold (very cold in the mountains), fairly dry and snowfall in the mountains/northern areas

**Spring & Autumn:** Warm days and cool nights

**Rainy Season(Jun-Jul):** Hot and muggy

Ave. Temp. °C / (°F)	Okinawa	Hiroshima	Kyoto	Tokyo	Sapporo
Jan	19 (66)	10 (50)	9 (48)	10 (50)	-1 (30)
Feb	19 (66)	11 (51)	10 (50)	11 (51)	0 (32)
Mar	22 (71)	14 (57)	14 (57)	14 (57)	4 (39)
Apr	23 (73)	20 (68)	20 (68)	19 (66)	12 (54)
May	23 (73)	24 (75)	25 (76)	23 (73)	17 (62)
June	24 (75)	27 (81)	28 (82)	26 (78)	22 (71)
Jul	29 (84)	31 (87)	32 (89)	29 (84)	25 (76)
Aug	32 (90)	33 (92)	33 (92)	31 (87)	26 (78)
Sep	32 (90)	29 (84)	29 (84)	27 (81)	23 (73)
Oct	30 (85)	24 (75)	23 (73)	22 (71)	16 (61)
Nov	24 (75)	18 (64)	17 (62)	16 (61)	9 (48)
Dec	21 (70)	12 (54)	12 (54)	12 (54)	2 (36)

# CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Experiencing different cultures is one of the joys of traveling. Please take note of the information below to better understand and respect these cultural differences in Japan.

- **Shoes:** There will of course be many occasions on which you are asked/expected to remove your shoes in Japan, so please be sure to wear socks with no holes in them. Sometimes these occasions will be more obvious than others, but as a general rule if you are entering a building and stepping up onto a higher level you are likely to have to take your shoes off. Another easy rule to remember is that you should never be wearing anything other than socks on your feet when on *tatami* matting – bare feet are fine in private contexts, shoes are definitely not!
- **Greetings:** Greetings in Japan are very formal and ritualized. It is important to show the correct amount of respect and deference to someone based upon their status relative to your own. It is considered impolite to introduce yourself, even in a large gathering so wait to be introduced. While foreigners are expected to shake hands, the traditional form of greeting is the bow. A foreign visitor ('gaijin') may bow the head slightly, since no one expects foreigners to generally understand the subtle nuances of bowing.
- **Chopsticks:** Chopsticks, or 'hashi' as they are known in Japanese, are used throughout the country. Don't worry if you are no chopstick expert, a little practice really does go a long way. Some Japanese style restaurants and noodle bars will not have knives and forks available, so you may want to practice beforehand. Some general chopstick rules:
  - Never point your chopsticks.
  - Do not pierce your food with chopsticks.
  - Do not cross your chopsticks when putting them on the chopstick rest.
  - Never pass food between chopsticks (i.e from your set to the person sat next to you)
  - Don't stand a pair of chopsticks upright in a bowl of rice.
  - When taking food from a communal dish, turn the chopsticks upside down and use the part that has not been in your mouth to select items.
  - When you have finished eating, place your chopsticks on the chopstick rest or on the table. Do not place your chopsticks across the top of your bowl.
- **Dining:** Please note the following etiquette for dining at formal meals
  - Wait to be told where to sit. There is a protocol to be followed.
  - The honored guest or the eldest person will be seated in the centre of the table the furthest from the door.
  - Conversation at the table is generally subdued. The Japanese like to savor their food.
  - The honored guest or the eldest is the first person to begin eating.
  - In most restaurants you will immediately be presented with a wet towel (oshibori). This should be used to wipe your hands clean before dining. If you want to use the oshibori to wipe your face, remember its hands first then face. And never blow your nose into your oshibori! It's considered rude in Japan to blow your nose at the table at all, so always head to the toilets to do so.
  - Slurping noises are a way to show a true appreciation of food. No slurp indicates a dislike for the food. So you will often hear people slurping their food around you.

- Mixing other food with rice is usually not done. You eat a bit of one and then a bit of the other, but they should never be mixed together as you do in many Western countries.
- It is acceptable to leave a small amount of food on your plate when you have finished eating.
- **Drinking:** When drinking in public, always allow someone else to fill your glass. If you do not want anything more to drink, do not finish what is in your glass. An empty glass is an invitation for someone to serve you more.
- **Tipping:** This is not customary in Japan. You are better off simply enjoying the good service and offering a big ‘thank you’ (in your best Japanese of course!) afterwards. Restaurants will not accept tips and will try to return the money to you if you try so it is better to refrain from tipping here. If a particular member of staff goes out of their way (especially over a number of days, such as hotel staff) to help you, then a small cash gift is an appropriate gift. However, please follow these tipping guidelines if you tip:
  - Place clean, unmarked bills in an envelope (one from the hotel is fine).
  - Make sure to not tip in amounts beginning with the number 4 (e.g. 4,000), as this number has the same pronunciation as “death” in Japanese and is thus considered unlucky.
  - Typically an amount between 2,000 to 5,000 yen is appropriate if you feel inclined to tip a guide or driver.
- **Bargaining/haggling:** Again this simply does not take place in Japan. The price shown will be a fair reflection of the value of the goods and by showing unwillingness to pay this amount you may cause confusion, if not offense. The only exception to this rule is if you are making a significant purchase (over10,000yen), where a discreet enquiry may get you a 5-10% discount

## Language

In Japan, the official language is Japanese. Although many of the locals you will be interacting with will speak English, it’s always considerate and may be helpful to learn a few phrases in Japanese. Below are some examples to get you started:

<i>English</i>	<i>Japanese</i>
Hello	Konnichiwa
How are you?	O genki desu ka?
I’m fine	Genki desu
Goodbye	Sayōnara
I’m Sorry	Gomennasai
Thank you (very much)	Domo arigato (gozaimasu)
Please	Kudasai/onegaishimasu

Yes	Hai
No	Iie/chigaimasu
No thank you	Kekkou desu
Excuse me	Sumimasen
Nice to meet you	Oaidekite ureshi desu
Have a nice day!	Yoi ichinichi o
I don't understand	Wakarimasen
What is your name?	O-namae wa nan desu ka
My name is _____.	Watashi no namae wa _____ desu
Where are the restrooms?	O-tearai wa doko desu ka

## Photography

Japan is a beautiful destination, and you will want to take lots of pictures. When photographing people, always ask permission first - this is a sign of respect. You can do this with gestures or ask your guide to translate. The only exception to this is when you are photographing a public scene with a lot of people in it, aiming at no one in particular. There are some places where photography is prohibited, and these areas are usually marked. If you are uncertain about whether or not photography is permitted, your guide will be there to advise you.

If you are interested in learning how to engage in ethical photography during your travels, check out our blog post, [“Nine questions to help decolonize your photography”](#).

## Human Trafficking in Travel

Elevate Destinations has signed *the Code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism* and expects all of its partners to refuse involvement, both direct and indirect, in the commercial sexual exploitation of children. A “child” is defined as a person younger than 18 years of age, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We encourage our travelers and suppliers to report the sexual exploitation of children. Information, even the smallest amount, can represent the missing piece of an ongoing investigation by law enforcement. If you are uncomfortable with leaving your name and contact information, you can report anonymously to law enforcement or NGOs. Report a concern [using this form](#); alternatively, you can email [protect@ecpat.net](mailto:protect@ecpat.net) to report sexual exploitation of children.

Read about Elevate’s values & vision, our [sustainability commitment](#), our programs that give back, and more on our website at [www.elevatedestinations.com](http://www.elevatedestinations.com). Our team members are always excited to share more on this topic. We acknowledge that to maintain truly sustainable travel products takes ongoing commitment. We continue to monitor our programs on the ground in order to improve them, and welcome your thoughts, feedback, and encouragement!

## Responsible Travel Tips

Elevate Destinations takes pride in its leadership in the field of responsible travel. We take care in selecting our local partners that share our environmental and social values and are avid supporters of locals working in the tourism industry as they are both the most impacted and impactful players at the local level. All of your ground costs on this trip are carbon offset using [SouthPole Flight’s Carbon Calculator](#), and we encourage you to offset your international flights as well.

Here are a few tips that can help enrich your experience as a responsible traveler:

- **Keep an open mind:** Try to observe local customs and respect traditional cultures and people.
- **Language:** Learn a few basic greetings and “thank you” in the local language.
- **Local economy:** Support locally owned businesses, restaurants, and other services. Shop from local artisans to promote traditional crafts and encourage contemporary arts.
- **Tipping/Bargaining:** Tipping and bargaining is not customary in Japan. If you do wish to show your appreciation with a cash gift then it is customary to place a clean, new note in an envelope.
- **Respect:** It is important to acknowledge the privacy and dignity of others and ask before photographing or filming people. Ask permission before entering sacred places, homes or private land, and take heed of local customs (i.e. remove shoes, hats, cover hair with shawl, etc). Please ask your guide if you are unsure; they are there to support your introduction to the culture!
- **Community and environment:** Contribute to organizations that support traditional cultures and protect the natural environment. Keep to designated trails, and do not disturb plants and animals or their natural habitats.
- **Animal products:** Avoid purchasing crafts, clothing, furniture or other products that are derived from members of protected or endangered animal species.
- **Use alternatives to single-use plastics:** Avoid using plastic bags and try to minimize the use of other disposables. When traveling in areas away from cities, make sure to take out what you take in. Try using a reusable water bottle and treating your own drinking water when possible – check out what our friends at [Travelers Against Plastic](#) are doing!

### Smart Traveler Tip!

In travel, especially in remote parts of the world, things happen. Expect the unexpected! Keep an open mind, be flexible, and enjoy the moment. Sometimes the best memories come out of the unplanned.